

CHAMPVA POLICY MANUAL

CHAPTER: 2
SECTION: 29.5
TITLE: FACET BLOCKS

AUTHORITY: 38 USC 1713; 38 CFR 17.270(a) and 17.272(a)

RELATED AUTHORITY: 32 CFR 199.4(c)(2)(i)

I. EFFECTIVE DATE

December 29, 1982

II. PROCEDURE CODE(S)

62273, 62281-62282, 62310-62311, 62319, 64470-64476, 64479-64484, 64999, 76005

III. DESCRIPTION

The spinal facet block is a diagnostic test and is also a treatment. Both an anesthetic agent and a steroid are injected into the facet joint. The anesthesia is used to eliminate the pain and the steroid acts as an anti-inflammatory agent. By using a facet block, it can be determined if a patient has a partially disrupted facet joint as opposed to a disc problem. This is often a one-time procedure, but reinjection may be necessary if the problem returns.

IV. POLICY

The spinal facet block is an accepted procedure in the diagnosis of a partially disrupted facet joint or when used to relieve pain and reduce the inflammation in the facet joint.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Spinal facet block injection is covered when provided by a physician as a diagnostic procedure to determine if the patient has a partially disrupted facet joint or in the treatment of pain related to the facet joint. The CHAMPVA Maximum Allowable Charge includes the cost for the medication.

B. If there are multiple injections on a single day or there is any question of over-utilization of the facet injections, the case should be referred to medical review. If more than one injection is approved by medical review, injections shall be paid according to multiple surgical procedures for unrelated conditions.

TRANSMITTAL #: 35
DATE: 02/26/2001
TRICARE CHANGE #: N/A

C. When fluoroscopic guidance and localization for needle placement is used for facet block procedures, the CPT code 76005 is covered in addition to the injection.

D. Injection of contrast material is considered an inclusive component of CPT codes 64470-64476.

END OF POLICY